

Listing of Claims:

1. (Previously Presented) A flat bed platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate, the system comprising:
 - a stationary supporting bed;
 - drive means for engaging the printing plate in direct contact with the stationary support bed and sliding the printing plate on the support bed in a direction of movement; and
 - an optical head being movably mounted on a stationary bridge, adapted to move across the direction of movement of the printing plate and being provided for emitting radiant energy onto the printing plate.
- 2-46. (Canceled)
47. (Previously Presented) A flat bed platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate, the system comprising:
 - a stationary supporting bed;
 - a carriage for engaging the printing plate in direct contact with the stationary support bed and sliding the printing plate on the supporting bed in a direction of movement; and
 - an optical head movably mounted on a stationary bridge and adapted to move across the direction of movement of the printing plate, wherein the optical head comprises emitters for emitting radiant energy onto the printing plate.
- 48-81. (Canceled)
82. (Previously presented) The system of claim 47, wherein the carriage has a base located under a supporting bed with sliding elements and a protruding section carrying suction cups and disposing the suction cups at the level where the printing plate is in direct contact with the stationary supporting bed.
83. (Previously presented) The system of claim 47, wherein the optical head is located in a container, and a lens, an edge detector, roller bearings, a moving part of a linear motor, an encoder and connectors are all located on a first side of at least one

supporting rail, and all connecting conduits are located on a second side of the rail to balance the weight of the optical head.

84. (Previously presented) The system of claim 83, wherein the carriage is attached to the linear motor at the center of gravity of the carriage.
85. (Previously presented) A system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate, the system comprising:
 - (a) at least two flat bed platesetter systems comprising:
 - (i) a carriage for moving the printing plate in a direction of movement over stationary supporting elements, and
 - (ii) an optical head movably mounted on a stationary bridge and adapted to move across the direction of movement of the printing plate, wherein the optical head comprises emitters for emitting radiant energy onto the printing plate; and
 - (b) a transport assembly including a feed chain, an exit chain and at least two branch chains located between the feed chain and the exit chain, wherein each of the flat bed platesetter systems is located in one of the branch chains.
86. (Previously presented) The system of claim 85, wherein the transport assembly further comprises at least one additional component selected from the group consisting of a loader, a stripper, a plate processor, a bender, a stocker or combinations thereof.
87. (Currently amended) A method for imaging a printing plate with radiant energy in a flat bed platesetter, the method comprising:
 - (a) providing a flat bed platesetter having a stationary support area;
 - (b) disposing a printing plate on, and in direct contact with, the stationary support area;
 - (c) positioning the printing plate in a defined and centered position on the support bed;
 - (d) sliding the printing plate in a first direction; and

- (e) moving a radiant energy emitting head in a second direction substantially perpendicular to the first direction to provide an image on the printing plate.
88. (Previously presented) The system of claim 1, wherein the stationary support bed comprises a field of roller bearings extending the length of the platesetter.
89. (Previously presented) The system of claim 47, wherein the carriage is configured to hold the printing plate from underneath as the carriage slides the printing plate on the stationary support bed.
90. (Previously presented) The system of claim 47, wherein the carriage comprises:
- a front sensor for detecting a printing plate ahead of the printing plate being slid by the carriage in the first direction, and
 - a rear sensor for detecting a printing plate behind the printing plate being slid by the carriage in the first direction.
91. (Previously presented) The system of claim 47, wherein the carriage is substantially narrower than the width of the printing plate across the direction of movement of the printing plate.
92. (Previously presented) The method of claim 87, further comprising attaching the positioned printing plate to a carriage which is substantially narrower than the width of the printing plate across the direction of movement of the printing plate.
93. (Previously presented) The method of claim 87, wherein the step of moving the radiant energy emitting head comprises moving an optical head, on which the radiant energy emitting head is mounted, on a stationary bridge across the direction of movement of the printing plate.
94. (Currently amended) A platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate, the system comprising:
- a support bed comprising a stationary support surface sufficiently large to receive and directly support the printing plate with one face of the printing plate in sliding contact with the support surface;
 - a printing plate positioning means for bringing the printing plate into a defined and centered position;

drive means for sliding the printing plate over the stationary support surface in a direction of movement;

an optical head movably mounted on a stationary bridge and adapted to move across the direction of movement of the printing plate, the optical head being adapted to emit radiant energy onto the printing plate; and

a plurality of bearings configured to maintain a portion of the printing plate at a predetermined distance from the optical head.

95. (Previously presented) The system of claim 94, wherein the optical head is adapted to focus the radiant energy onto a focus plane, and the plurality of bearings are configured to maintain the portion of the printing plate in the focus plane.
96. (Previously presented) The system of claim 95, wherein the plurality of bearings comprises a first row of bearings located under the printing plate and a second row of bearings over the printing plate.
97. (Previously presented) The system of claim 95, wherein the plurality of bearing comprise a plurality of rows of precision bearing and corresponding plurality of rows of pressure bearings, the rows of pressure bearings being offset from the corresponding rows of precision bearing.
98. (Currently Amended) A platesetter system for imaging radiant energy onto a printing plate, the system comprising:

a support bed having a support field defining a support plane;

a printing plate positioning means for bringing the printing plate into a defined and centered position;

a carriage movable across the support field in a direction of movement and having a holder adapted to secure the printing plate to the carriage and maintain the printing plate at the level of the support plane and in direct contact with the support bed; and

an optical head movably mounted on a stationary bridge and adapted to move across the direction of movement of the carriage, the optical head comprising emitters for emitting radiant energy onto the printing plate.

99. (Previously presented) The platesetter system of claim 98, wherein the carriage is moveable across the support field in stepwise motion.
100. (Previously presented) The platesetter system of claim 98, wherein the support is adapted to maintain the printing plate at a precise distance from the optical head while the carriage moves the printing plate across the support field.
101. (Previously presented) The platesetter system of claim 98, wherein the support bed is adapted to maintain the printing plate flat in the support plane.
102. (Previously presented) The platesetter system of claim 98, wherein the carriage is adapted to securely maintain the printing plate in a stationary position while the optical head moves and emits energy onto the printing plate.
103. (Previously presented) The platesetter system of claim 1, wherein the carriage is moveable across the support field in stepwise motion.
104. (Previously presented) The platesetter system of claim 1, wherein the support is adapted to maintain the printing plate at a precise distance from the optical head while the carriage moves the printing plate across the support field.
105. (Previously presented) The platesetter system of claim 1, wherein the support bed is adapted to maintain the printing plate flat in the support plane.
106. (Previously presented) The platesetter system of claim 1, wherein the carriage is adapted to securely maintain the printing plate in a stationary position while the optical head moves and emits energy onto the printing plate.
107. (Previously presented) The platesetter system of claim 47, wherein the carriage is moveable across the support field in stepwise motion.
108. (Previously presented) The platesetter system of claim 47, wherein the support is adapted to maintain the printing plate at a precise distance from the optical head while the carriage moves the printing plate across the support field.
109. (Previously presented) The platesetter system of claim 47, wherein the support bed is adapted to maintain the printing plate flat in the support plane.

110. (Previously presented) The platesetter system of claim 47, wherein the carriage is adapted to securely maintain the printing plate in a stationary position while the optical head moves and emits energy onto the printing plate.
111. (New) The platesetter system of claim 1, comprising a printing plate positioning means for bringing the printing plate into a defined and centered position.
112. (New) The system of claim 47, comprising a printing plate positioning means for bringing the printing plate into a defined and centered position.